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February 28, 2001 LB 227

Mr. President, the next bill is LB 227 by Senator Thompson.

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Thompson, you're recognized to open on LB 227. I'm sorry.

CLERK: (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 5, referred to the Health Committee, advanced to General File. I do have committee amendments. (AM0166, Legislative Journal page 525.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Now, Senator Thompson, you're recognized to open on LB 277...LB 227, excuse me.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. LB 227 is similar to the bill that was brought before you last year. It was introduced to you three years ago, the previous session. The difference between that bill and this bill, essentially, is two things. One is the previous bill had some language dealing with the Clean Indoor Air Act and updates from when it was originally passed in 1979, as well as the ban on smoking in restaurants. This bill is just the restaurant smoking ban. The other bill is coming up later. And last year I kind of had regrets that I hadn't split them, because I thought maybe it would be easier to get the other bill passed alone. So, rather than drag the issue or spread out the issue too far, I split the bill. The only other new aspect to this bill is that it has a clause that allows local ordinances in cities or counties, or actually cities to be able to...to be able to pass more restrictive law than what we do at the state level. So this is a basic level of law that would prohibit smoking in restaurants, unless the restaurant has a separate bar area where people could dine and smoke if the area is separated. Smoking remains permitted in bars, and bars itself more alcohol and receive more sales revenue from alcohol beverages. Alcoholic beverages and receipts from entertainment and dancing would be considered a bar by definition under this bill. And, well, it may still serve food, but it wouldn't be under this bill. If a restaurant has a private party room and wanted to have that party room designated possibly for smoking, they could do so, but that would be up to the owner whether they would allow people who rent the room to make that decision. And